

The Eclectic Theosophist

FOLLOWING THE BLAVATSKY AND POINT LOMA TRADITION

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Per Copy 50c

“...Boundless and Immutable

There are no more cleansing words—the adjective is deliberate—than those of the first postulate of the Secret Doctrine: “an Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE.” They are cleansing in their utter impersonality, freeing to the degree that we overcome the illusions, the *mâyâs*, which surround us, and seek for meaning behind the words.

PRINCIPLE—what is its meaning here? It is the sum of all that is, atoms, worlds innumerable, and all gradations of beings filling the infinite playgrounds of Space. As H.P. Blavatsky declares, it is “the rootless root of ‘all that was, is, or ever shall be.’” And continues (S.D.I, p. 14), “It is of course devoid of all attributes and is essentially without any relation to manifested, finite Being. It is ‘Be-ness’ rather than Being (in Sanskrit *Sat*), and is beyond all thought or speculation...”

So to our human senses it remains in its ever unreachableness a Mystery. And it is a paradox because it is not a being vaguely super-divine; yet also it is not an abstraction, something non-existent. To IT, then, being what could be considered the Supreme, do we pray, do we petition? Never. It is actually that fed-to-us idea of prayer, of asking for something for ourselves or even for others, that prevents us from grasping the truths of being. So the first step, and perhaps a last, towards an understanding of this profound fundamental Principle is recognition of its utter Impersonality. Prayers and petitions then give way to that which only is uplifting in universal compassion for all. And that is true reverence, a feeling of oneness with, and inner obedience to, the Law, entirely free of taint of a lingering anthropomorphism.

And now as to those word modifiers HPB uses in her first postulate. That Principle, again, what is it? It is *omnipresent*; it is *eternal*—words affirmative, assertive, positive. It is *boundless*; it is *immutable*—negatives used to deny limitation of any kind, resisting concrete definition, and thus stronger even than the positive adjectives. The combination of these positive-negatives then is an effort to explain what is unexplainable. So in a sense PRINCIPLE stands alone—for whatever idea-clothing we give to it. It is indefinable in words. It is THAT. So we come to the conclusion that in thought only can we reach toward it, only in meditation, only in dedicated act.

And it is that effort which is freeing, liberating, the necessity for which, it seems to me, must be realized. Even some Theosophists—perhaps, alas, more than we conjecture—with minds still fogged by stifling ideas inculcated in their childhood years, find the impersonality of the

thought discomfiting. They miss, they say, the ‘Father-feeling,’ a ‘god’ in a vague sort of way but yet an actual person. Impersonality does not appeal to them. They may have heard of the hierarchical constitution of the universe where hierarchy is headed by Hierarch, the pinnacle of evolution for that sphere, the ‘god’ representing all that that universe is. And they know, as the Ancient Wisdom teaches, that beyond Hierarch is what is greater, and beyond that still a Greater. Yet illogically they cling to a personal pronoun and invest that being anthropomorphically with human attributes.

The second and third postulates of the S.D. follow. We are all hostage to the cycles. We know of the lesser one, our brief moment of earth-life. The vaster ones embrace cosmic periods beyond our ken. But atom, man, god, worlds, cosmoi, galaxies, super-galaxies, all are ruled by a law of absolute universality. From out the fathomless ALL all beings issue and return, a ceaseless tidal ebb and flow. It is the pulse-beat of Eternity, the Outbreathing and Inbreathing of Infinity. All must obey.

And the third postulate: all beings and things *at heart*, at their very core, are THAT. For those who seek solace and comfort, what more inspiring, more remedial thought, than that within our very selves, *even as we are now*, is the essence of THAT, the uncircumscribed Divine.

But to return to the first postulate, have we, after a hundred years, fully grasped its meaning? The challenge is there, and the upliftment, and the cleansing. We hear the gong-like sounds filling all Space... *Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, Immutable*. And then the Silence.

—W.E.S.

MEDITATIONS—23

The ever unknowable and incognizable *Karana* alone, the Causeless Cause of all causes, should have its shrine and altar on the holy and ever untrodden ground and altar of our heart—invisible, intangible. unmentioned, save through ‘the still small voice’ of our spiritual consciousness. Those who worship before it, ought to do so in the silence and the sanctified solitude of their Souls, making their spirit the sole mediator between them and the *Universal Spirit*, their good actions the only priests, and their sinful intentions the only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the *Presence*.

—H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 280

AND WE QUOTE...

Death and Dying

The student of Theosophy distinguishes between the process of *dying* in its physical sense, and the actual withdrawal of the entity from its incarnated existence. Physical *dying* is in many cases connected with suffering and pain, which proper care should be able to alleviate. There is nothing beautiful about it or pleasant, except, maybe, in those fairly rare cases when the *dying* is peaceful and largely painless. But what we call *death* itself, is total liberation, complete withdrawal, freedom from the body, and is therefore supremely beautiful in consciousness and the sense of freedom. A clear distinction should be made at all times between death and dying. The one is a spiritual process, while the other is a physico-astral series of events which are the outer manifestation of withdrawal. In ages of the future, when the human entity has grown spiritually and has reached stages of inner illumination, even physical dying will be devoid of any suffering or discomfort and as natural as falling asleep.

—Boris de Zirkoff, 'On the Process of Dying,'
The American Theosophist, May 1973

To Guide Our Thinking

We have in Theosophy the tools of metaphysics and language with which to expand our understanding of the psychic states through which we pass, and we have the Fundamental Propositions of the Secret Doctrine to guide our thinking by the principles on which all thought must be based. The similarities of experience are to be understood through the law of cycles; the feeling of devotion, brotherhood, and compassion springs from the radical unity in essence of all that is; while human longings, however reflected or even inverted, are all expressions of the great movement of the whole of life to return to its source.

—From "The Work of Humans,"
Theosophy (U.L.T.), Nov. 1980

How We Live Each Day

Without self-reliance, we lean upon others; without impersonality, our egotistical biases and prejudices feed the Great Heresy of Separateness. The Path of Chelaship demands self-reliance, self-discipline and self-sacrifice; and to travel on it, *altruism must be made the aim of life*. The rules of Occultism will not bend to cushion our weakness and mistakes. We either make or miss the mark in how we live each single day.

—Vonda Urban: "What Is Our Responsibility I-Q?"
Theosophia, Fall 1980

Content

"I am content, wherever I be and whatever I do."

"But now it is time to die."

"Why say 'die?' Make no tragic parade of the matter, but speak of it as it is: 'It is now time for the material of which you are constituted to be restored to those elements from which it came.' And what is there terrible about that?"

—Epictetus, quoted in an article on him in
Hermes, May 3, 1980

Into Space—and Beyond

L. Gordon Plummer

Beyond Space? What can there possibly be out there? "Out there" has no meaning in this context, for the kind of space that we are going to investigate is here, there, within and without—in fact everywhere.

Let us look first at Space as Science sees it. The terms 'Microcosm' and 'Macrocosm' are used, but not quite in the sense that the old Greek philosophers employed them. Whereas by 'Microcosm' the inner self of Man was meant, this term now applies to the space within the atom. Confining our discussion for the moment to strictly scientific concepts, there is no word for the inner self of man, because that is not important to an understanding of the laws relating to the origin and ultimate fate of the universe and to the origin and nature of the atom. These are investigated on a purely material basis, and life from the viewpoint of the cosmologist is unimportant. The universe is the only way that it could be, and so are the atoms. The galaxies, stars, planets, and what not, would have been formed just as they are conceived to have been, and would continue on to their end irrespective of whether or not life had emerged. Similarly so with the atoms.

Thus, the study of such modern concepts as the 'Big Bang' and the 'Black Holes,' fascinating as they are (so far as they go), takes no account of the wonders of living things. Some scientists who have delved into the life processes tell us that they are merely the end result of the chemical and electrical processes between the atoms and molecules within the bodies of all living things. Their recent researches into the formation of some of the amino acid molecules resulting from electrical discharges through certain gases seems to bear out their contentions.

How marvelous lifeless matter must be to hold within itself the potentiality of all the good and the evil that exists in human life, to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands of species of other inhabitants of our world! If the lowly atom holds such potentialities does it not seem that it too must express a life of its own?

Let us consider for a moment the atoms of my body. The body is undoubtedly alive during the span of my sojourn here. The marvels of living flesh are endless. Are the atoms of which my body is composed alive, any more than they were when they were a part of the air I breathe, the food I eat? After all, the food is made by living plants which alone can take the raw materials of the Earth and transform them into usable food for animals and humans.

Apparently we must make a choice: Are we alive because of the combinations and behavior of atoms and molecules? Or has this complex wonder that is the human body come into being because of a living essence that we may term Mind and Soul? Not being satisfied with such words as vague as these, we then enter upon a study of the true nature of the mind and the soul or spirit and immediately find we are embarked upon a new kind of space exploration, to wit, *inner space* as contrasted with the outer space of the universe and the atom. Those who have studied have discovered that the wonders of outer space are indeed

of ever-growing fascination, yet they pale beside the inexpressible vistas that stand revealed before the inner eye.

We may rejoice that insights into this inner space are to be found everywhere in the heart of all the great religions and philosophies of the world. And in the medium of this magazine for students of the Ancient Wisdom it is right that we should point with reverence to the source of what we know today of the Esoteric Philosophy. Anyone may approach that source if his motivation to learn is high and his interest never lags. "Ask and you shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you."

AGE OF AQUARIUS—1981 (Part II)

John Drais

Jupiter conjuncts Saturn in 1981, an event which happens every 20 years. This series of conjunctions is an orderly, calculable sequence in the spatial alignment of Earth, Jupiter and Saturn. As if this line were an arrow in space, it points sequentially to certain zodiacal constellations in the background. The sequence of 20 year conjunctions is itself cyclical with a period of 2160 years, and marks its culmination with an extra conjunction. That happened in 1961. The conjunction of 1981 is, therefore, the first of a new messianic cycle.

"... exoteric cycles of every nation have been correctly made to be derived from and depend upon sidereal motions. The latter are inseparably blended with the destiny of nations and men..." (S.D. I, 645)

The cause of the dependence on the relative motion of stars is not, of course, gravitational, for cycles vibrate at natural frequencies whether they are physical, psychological or spiritual. But this dependence is rather a consequence of our universal septenary division and our relative motion through space. We are enabled thereby to observe the seven Sacred Planets in their aspects with one another and with the Earth and to determine the nature of the prevailing relationship among the seven Mystery Gods, who are their regents.

ויאמר אלהים יהי מארת ברקיע השמים להבדיל בין היום ובין הלילה והיו לאתת ולמועדים ולימים ושנים.

"And ALHIM said, 'Let there be *lights* (*meoroth*) in the heavenly firmament to make a division between the day and the night and to be for *signs*, for seasons, for days, and years.' (Gen. i, 4; the fourth day.)

The stars upon which our cycles depend then are these heavenly lights. Now, since the dependence is not gravitational, what or who are these lights? In the Kabala א and ע can be interchanged to derive a meaningful relationship between the before and after forms. So אור becomes עור, just as *light* becomes *skin* or *physical form*, their respective literal translations.

In discussing the exit of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and their consequent physicalization, Blavatsky quotes from the *Chaldean Book of Numbers* in both *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*.

"And Yava-Aleim (chief hierophant) made for Adam

and his wife כְּתָנֹת עוֹר; KOTHNOTH OR." (I.U. I,575; S.D. II,202) See Gen. iii,21.

KOTHNOTH OR is translated "coats of skin" usually, but by a transformation similar to that of "light" to "skin," כְּתָן, coat, becomes קָטָן, little, and "coats of skin" becomes "little light" or "little form." The *Zohar* and Nurho de Manhar comment on this relationship:

"And God said 'Let there be light (Gen. i,14); the word *meoroth* (lights) is defective in the Hebrew, being written without *vau*... When the primal light was yet invisible or unmanifest, a covering formed itself around it, which, becoming enlarged, produced a second that extended itself to "little form" with which it wished to be united and bear its form permanently. (f.n. by N.de M.) Little Form, denoting the world of forms and beings before incarnating as human beings on the earth plane. The psalmist, speaking of man, says, 'Thou hast made him "littler" than the angels, that is, in form and mind.'" (*Zohar: Bereshith* 19b, Wizard edition, 103.)

Blavatsky categorized the material of *The Secret Doctrine* under six headings, one of which treats of these "angels" as a "Hierarchy of Consciousness." It is comprised of a descending series of incipient man, human man at the turning point, and an ascending series of perfected man called "Living Ones" (see S.D. I,274) or Dhyanis, and, in their highest state, "the parentless" or "Lords of Being." From these

"proceed numerous hierarchies of Creative Forces, some formless, others having their own distinct form..." (S.D. II,33)

The functional relationship between these Lights of the Firmament and their "little forms" with astronomical epochs, that is, between the worlds of consciousness and matter, is also made clear:

"Theoretically, the Kalpas are infinite, but practically they are divided and subdivided in Space and Time, each division—down to the smallest—having its own Dhyani as patron or regent." (S.D. II,179)

The particular Dhyâni associated with the Messianic Cycle is called, of course, the Messiah, i.e., the anointed one, and is an Avatâra of the type born from woman (see *Theosophical Glossary: Avatara*). The beginning of this cycle marks the recurrence of

"The descent of a god or some exalted Being, who has progressed beyond the necessity of Rebirths, into the body of a simple mortal..." (T.G. *avatara*)

His symbol is the sun,

"... the chief, exoterically, of the twelve great gods, or zodiacal constellations; and, esoterically, the Messiah, the Christos (the subject *annointed* by the Great BREATH, or the ONE) surrounded by his twelve subordinate powers, also subordinate, in turn, to each of the seven 'Mystery gods' of the planets." (S.D. II,23)

"Theosophists... who understand the hidden meaning of the universally expected Avatars, Messiahs, Sosioshes and Christs,—know that it is no 'end of the world,' but the 'consummation of the age,'

i.e., the close of a cycle, which is now fast approaching. (f.n.) There are several remarkable cycles that come to a close at the end of this century. First, the 5000 years of the Kaliyuga cycle; again the Messianic cycle of the Samaritan (also Kabalistic) Jews of the man connected with *Pisces* (Ichthys or 'Fish-man' *Dag*). It is a cycle, historic and not very long, but very occult, lasting about 2155 years, but having a true significance only when computed by lunar months. It occurred 2410 and 255 B.C., or when the equinox entered into the sign of the *Ram*, and again into that of *Pisces*. When it enters, in a few years, the sign of *Aquarius*, psychologists will have some extra work to do, and the psychic idiosyncracies of humanity will enter on a great change."

Thus it is apparent that the Avatar of each of these Messianic Kalpas is the result of the descent of one of the seven Mystery Gods into a perfected human, by which anointing he becomes the son of the father (the solar logos). He is characterized by the solar relationship to its subordinate twelve zodiacal types, the moveable signs of astrology. But the Dhyani watches over the complete cycle, not merely the term of the manifested Avatar, and the nature of each of the 109 twenty year portions of this term is clearly indicated by the *signs*. These Lights of the Firmament are indeed "signs" and the nature of the Dhyani correlates, therefore, with the position of Jupiter and Saturn as they conjunct through all possible quadruplicity-triplicity permutations. The reader is invited to read further on this interesting subject in *To Rule Both Day and Night: Astrology in the Bible, Midrash and Talmud*, by Rabbi J.C. Dobin (*Inner Traditions International*, 1977).

A LITTLE CRUMB SPEAKS

Why Study Theosophy?

Del Cook

Crumbs don't bother me anymore. But they sure used to.

Consider whence came a crumb. It all began with Farmer John's thoughts of a wheat field. So he took some wheat seeds, patted them into some earth, and let the rain and sun take care of the rest. After that there were harvesters, packers, truckers, buyers, processors, breadbakers, and bread. Then there were crumbs.

So after toasting my bread, these terrible crumbs would always fall somewhere. What a nuisance!

Until Theosophy.

Now those little guys are so incredible I savor every crumlet from each bite of my morning raisin toast.

Because now I understand them. And I realize that in just one crumb is the entire Universe.

We've got all these bits and pieces of material life to deal with. In one sense it's gross stuff. Yet in another, it's all there for us to use, suffer with, learn from, and thus eventually appreciate.

But appreciate nuisances? Of course, says Theosophy. Because when we get right down to it, we are like crumbs. We can be a bother to ourselves, to others, let alone to the Great Scheme of Things.

Through Theosophy, however, we learn to love it all. The small stuff and the big. If we know whence we came—how like crumbs we lie on the saucer of Earth and how we're recycled through the process inherent in the Plan—we too become important. We now may be crumbs, but what a big Thought we were! And, don't ever forget, as we said, within each little crumb lies, unevolved as yet, a whole Universe.

PEN-NAMES OF WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE

In response to inquiries, we give here a list of the various pen-names of William Q. Judge, as prepared basically by Joseph H. Fussell, who in the early 1890's was Judge's private secretary. Articles and stories under these names, in addition to those written under Judge's own signature—the great bulk within the last ten years of his brief life—are, among other things, witness to his amazing productivity and untiring labor for the Cause he served.

It should be noted that Judge's articles written for *The Path* and other theosophical journals of those historic days of great importance (1886-1896) are today available to the reader in the recently published volumes by Point Loma Publications, Inc., *Echoes of the Orient*, Vol. I and II, compiled and edited by Dara Eklund.

—EDITORS

In various volumes of *The Path*:

Z	QWilliam
Zadok	Râmatirtha
Hadji Erinn	Mattânanda
Eusebio Urban	Rodriguez Undiano
Urban	Nilakant
William Brehon	Moulvie
Bryan Kinnavan	

Also in *The Path*, in Volume VII:

A.T. Mana (p.273)	One of the Recipients (p. 335)
Alpha (p.289)	One of the Staff (p. 344)
An Obscure Brahmin (p. 303)	

And in *The Path*, in Volume VI:

F.T.S. (p. 48) (It does not follow, however, that all other articles signed F.T.S. are by Judge.)

It may be taken generally that unsigned articles in *The Path*, such as 'Astral Intoxication' or 'Epitome of Theosophy' (in Vol. 2), and others, are by Judge; also most certainly 'Conversations on Occultism.' However, not all unsigned articles are by him. For instance, Vol. VI, p. 71, 'Loss of the Soul' (continued from the April number) is unsigned. Reference to the April issue will show that the article is signed 'Harij,' which is the *nom de plume* of Jirah D. Buck. This is the second installment, the first appearing in March 1891.

It may also be interesting to note that all or nearly all of Mr. Judge's mystical tales are signed Bryan Kinnavan; his philosophical articles, as for instance those on the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, by William Brehon; most of his correspondence and answers to questions by Zadok or Z.

Names Sometimes, but Wrongly, Ascribed to Judge:

American Mystic (this is probably J.D. Buck)	
Harij (Jirah D. Buck—'Jirah' spelt backwards)	
Pilgrim	Rameses (Clement Griscom)
Murdhna Joti	G. Hijo (Griscom)
Jasper Niemand; J; and Julius—all of which are	
Mrs. Julia Verplanck, later Mrs. Archibald Keightley	

NOT WORTH READING, NOT WORTH REVIEWING

(Extract from 'On the Lookout' in *Theosophy*, November 1980)

Once again a totally irresponsible book about Madame Blavatsky has appeared, described in *Time* for Sept. 15 by a totally irresponsible review. The book is titled *Madame Blavatsky, the Woman Behind the Myth*, the author is Marion Meade, and the publisher Putnam. Judging from the *Time* account, this volume is little more than a re-run of past lies and misconceptions, filled with the same misinformation as that provided in Gertrude Marvin Williams' *Priestess of the Occult*, which was published by Knopf in 1946 and received critical attention in the Magazine for December 1946. More or less accidentally, some facts about H.P.B. are given in the Meade volume and repeated by *Time*. H.P.B. did found the Theosophical Society and she did help to "revive the consciousness of India." Her motive, the reviewer is constrained to admit, "was not fraud of the financial kind; she supported herself and sometimes the Theosophical Society by prodigious feats of freelance journalism, mostly for Russian newspapers."

Little else in the review seems worth repeating, although for the record it needs to be said once again that H.P.B. had no "lovers," gave birth to no illegitimate child, was not a parlor conjuror, did not smoke hashish, was not a charlatan for a high cause, never practiced hypnotism, learned no "tricks" from a Coptic magician in Cairo, and wrote no "long, marvelously jumbled works of Oriental philosophy," her books being quite otherwise, as every student knows. It is not good practice to take notice of a book only from a review, but in this case the review serves chiefly to show that the book is not worth reading, and indeed, not worth reviewing, save for note of the fact that such volumes of deliberate calumny go on appearing.

BOOK REVIEWS

Masters and Men, by Virginia Hanson. *The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, Cloth, \$7.50*

Reverence for two of the Great Souls of the Occult world, Morya and Koot Hoomi, loyalty, admiration, and sympathy for their Messenger, the intrepid Helena Blavatsky, appreciation for the indefatigable Olcott, and devotion to the principles and efforts of the Theosophical Society, characterize the narrative of *MASTERS AND MEN* by Virginia Hanson. Though told within a factual frame, the story is embellished throughout by fictional touches that endear the personalities struggling, even suffering, in their attempt to understand and carry out the often unexplained demands of the Occult Hierarchy to the reader who himself may be bewildered by all that is transpiring in the book.

Mystery, intrigue, fraud, deceit, chicanery, character assassination, misjudgments of personalities, mistaken decisions, temper tantrums, pathos, and success dot the progression of the story and make for great suspense—Will the Society be able to withstand the onslaughts of its enemies? Why are the Great Ones so mysterious, and why

do they withhold themselves from earnest, aspiring students? Will H.P.B. stand up to it all or will she collapse completely before the fledgling Society becomes strong? Are the phenomena performed by Blavatsky genuine? Will Sinnett be able to achieve his praiseworthy desire to meet the Master face to face and be approved by him? These are all the elements of a good detective story, but to call this a 'Who-done-it' would be to vulgarize the book which is most serious and based on a sacred interval in history.

An author less honest would have glossed over the explosions of temper in H.P.B. or made excuses for her often peevish complaints or even the 'human' side of the Masters. This fearless forthrightness gives strength to the book and support to its truth.

The story begins with the journey in 1879 of H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott to India where they establish headquarters and carry the Theosophical message all over the subcontinent and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Soon they attract the attention (and curiosity) of A. P. Sinnett, the brilliant editor of a newspaper in Allahabad, who steeped in his English culture is inclined to be skeptical of any philosophy derived from an 'inferior race,' but who nevertheless is deeply interested in H.P.B.'s reputation for producing phenomena. He soon recognizes her as an aristocrat and mystic. In beautiful Simla, where he and his wife have a home, H.P.B. satisfies his curiosity by demonstrating her ability in the Occult. With his gentle wife Patience he interests A. O. Hume (an eminent ornithologist, who also has a home in Simla) in Blavatsky, the Masters, and the Movement. They propose to organize an Eclectic Theosophical Society to attract well-born and prominent English into the work. They are eventually given permission through H.P.B. by the Masters to do this. The two men—first Sinnett, then Hume—persuade H.P.B. to deliver letters to the Masters and beg for answers to their questions and hope for face-to-face meetings with them, not realizing at all the barriers and rules required by the Occult Brotherhood. Hume soon becomes suspicious of the whole Blavatsky-Olcott effort and petulant over the frequent refusals of the Master to grant his requests. Sinnett, on the other hand, staunchly supported by Patience who implicitly believes in the Masters and H.P.B., stays with the Society and the correspondence with the Mahâttmas although he is often perplexed if not vexed at what he cannot understand. (Conversations between the Sinnetts as recorded by the author fictionally are charming and true to the character of each.) Sinnett writes his *The Occult World*, assists in strengthening the London Lodge, is fired from his prestigious job in Allahabad partly because of his interest in occultism, suffers heart-breaking losses and grievous tragedies. An epilogue completes the book telling what happened to various personalities named. Little is left out. All events and characters weave a significant, dramatic story, a true story.

Personalities in the narrative are drawn vividly and sympathetically. There are interesting glimpses of so many among them—Damodar, Subba Row, Mohini, Kingsford, Olcott, 'the Old Lady,' and the Masters of course. It is easy

to identify with Sinnett, quite easy to feel his disappointments, even easy to understand his reluctance to endeavor to break the habits of a lifetime. Nevertheless, his was a great contribution to the Theosophical effort: the saving of all the letters from the Mahâtmas which have been given to the world to read and study.

The Masters are presented not as shadowy beings of imagined deific import, but as real men, articulate, firm, compassionate, and wise. The book is thoroughly documented, generous excerpts from 'The Letters' are well chosen, summaries of extracts clear and appropriate to the events of the book given. The tone of this well written account is that of devotion to the sturdy, faithful souls who made the Beloved *Organization* work!

—Jalie N. Shore

Dhammapada—Wisdom of the Buddha. *English-Pâli edition. Translation by Harischandra Kaviratna. Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, California, Paper, 205 pages, \$5.00.*

It is generally known that Gautama Buddha never left any of his teachings in writing; and that it was the zeal and devotion of five hundred of his disciples, led by Kâsyapa, who met in council after Gautama's death to recall the truths they had received from their exalted Teacher. From this act of devotion have sprung the scores of versions of the Dhammapada, its teachings and commentaries, throughout many of the world's literatures, undoubtedly with varying degrees of excellence and accuracy.

In this version, it should be noted that both the Foreword and the Introduction are an essential part of the study. Dr. Kaviratna's Introduction is itself of inestimable value not only for its charm and erudition, but for the vivid background it gives of the spread of Wisdom Teaching through the ages.

The author's translations of the Teachings of the Buddha have the 'underpinnings,' so to speak, of his immense erudition. This is brilliantly shown in the record of his achievements, as noted on the back cover of this book; but is also shown in his skillful translations of the Buddha's precepts, where he has striven to reach to the heart of the Buddha's teaching, not neglecting the use of metaphor and simile which add to the inner strength and charm of the Dhammapada.

—Helen Todd

FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

February 9, 1981

Editors The Eclectic Theosophist:

If only in view of the many inventions and scientific discoveries made in the past eighty years, that anyone could question our being in the Aquarian Age is puzzling indeed. Moreover, astronomy proves it.

The equinoctial point, as every tyro in astronomy knows, moves backwards through the constellations at the rate of one degree every 72 years. Multiplying 72 by 30

degrees for each zodiacal sign, 2,160 years results—the Messianic Cycle.

In 2423 B.C., at the time of the Vernal Equinox, the first point of the movable sign Aries entered the fixed constellation Aries. 2,160 years later it entered the constellation Pisces, then continuing on for another 2,160 years and entering the constellation Aquarius in 1898-9.

In H. P. Blavatsky's article, *The Esoteric Character of the Gospels*, written in 1887, and now republished in her *Collected Writings*, Vol. viii, p. 174, appears the following.

"There are several remarkable cycles that come to a close at the end of the century. First, the 5,000 years of the Kaliyuga cycle; again the Messianic Cycle of the Samaritan Jews of the man connected with Pisces." Later on in the same paragraph, speaking of the equinox, she states: "When it enters, in a few years, the Sign of Aquarius, psychologists will have some extra work to do, and the psychic idiosyncrasies of humanity will enter on a great change."

—George Cardinal LeGros

(The above is commentary on the article in our last issue by John Drais, "Age of Aquarius—1981." —Eds.)

Marc Genar, Belgium—What a splendid appraisal (in *Eclectic* Jan-Feb.'81) of HPB and her "Secret Doctrine" in the New York Times! I think we are entering a Theosophical Renaissance and hope the seeds will be very fructifying for humanity.

Geoffrey Farthing, England—The two Judge books (*Echoes of the Orient*) are fine. All would-be Theosophists should read them.

John Cooper, Nainital, Utter Pradesh, India—Moving down the Chowndi Chowk in Old Delhi, I turned to my daughter and said, "As I was walking down the Chaundi Chawk I met Jimgrim," for we were in Talbot Mundy country. Around us was the indescribable rush of the East, where we have been for a week—Bangkok, Delhi, Agra, and now we have been for two days in Nainital, a hill station of the British.

Yesterday we (wife, 2 children & J) climbed Cheena Peak, 8,568 ft. At the top is a tea-house and we sat and saw before us the majesty of the Himalayas; 300 km by road to the west is Badrinath, on the Hindu pilgrimage trail; before us Nandi Devi with its 3 peaks at 25,000 ft., and on our right the peaks in Nepal. It is a world beyond space and time, silent, unchanging, with the peaks floating in space. If there are Mahatmas on earth then their spirit is here.

Tomorrow we go to Almora where, until last month, lived Anagarika Govinda in Evans-Wentz' house, and which is near the Krishna Prem ashram, now run by Madhava Asish. We will rent a house (we hope) and live there for 3 weeks. Then either Benares or Delhi, and then Adyar for, I hope, 2 weeks of research. Then back to Sydney.

In Nainital we are living in the Swiss Hotel, bed and breakfast for us all at 140 rupees (\$16.00 USA a day including servant). It is now 5 p.m. and so cold I cannot write

clearly and we go to bed at 8:00 p.m. to avoid the cold. Tomorrow we face the usual confusion: when does the bus leave for Almora? We have several different times, but it will sort itself out.

In Almora we lived in two stone huts at 6,000 feet with monkeys around us in the daytime and the possibility of leopards roaming around at night. The view from our window extends 100 miles to the High Himalayas, and we spend our days in walking, climbing, visiting Lamas, Tibetans, Professors of Sanskrit, musicians, and drinking tea at the local Chaya House.

Other news: the Greg Tillett biography of CWL (C. W. Leadbeater) is now with Routledge, Kegan Paul for 1981 publication. Congratulations on *Echoes* Vol II which is invaluable for research... I look forward to the Mundy and Evans-Wentz biographies and am collecting material for a Theosophical biography of John Prentice which I hope to publish with some of his major articles.

Do you know where I can get volumes of *The Path*, *The Canadian Theosophist*, *Theosophical Quarterly*, *The Word*, and *Lucifer* (after 1891, as I have early volumes, *The Theosophist* up to 1905)? I am building up the only Theosophical archives in Australia, and it is already being used by researchers.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Theosophical Research Center

"The Theosophical Research Center in Ashland, Oregon, has been established for the purpose of doing long-term primary research in the Ageless Wisdom. On the basis of interpretations found in *The Secret Doctrine* and related literature (such as *The Theosophist*, *Lucifer*, *The Path*, etc.) a systematic study of Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, and Zoroastrian scriptures in their original languages has been undertaken with a view to augmenting available knowledge. This use of original languages is necessary because English translations do not always exist, and even when they do, they are inadequate for purposes of symbolic interpretation.

"Results so far in the areas of astrology and medicine, for example, definitely warrant further research; but the field is vast and the researchers are few. We therefore invite correspondence from other serious students. For those so inclined, but lacking the necessary language skills, instruction in Sanskrit (which is also a pre-requisite for the other languages) is available here. It is possible, with sustained effort, to develop a reading knowledge of Sanskrit in three years of study.

"Correspondence should be addressed to: Theosophical Research Center, P.O. Box 192, Ashland, OR, 97520."

Blavatskyhuis, The Hague

Mr. D.J.P.Kok writes that on January 31st Stichting I.S.I.S. (International Study-Center for Independent Search for Truth), The Hague, Holland, celebrated its tenth anniversary of the opening of Blavatsky-house. Over 80 students are now taking the theosophical courses on "Thinking Differently" and "Wisdom of Life"; and yet

another more technical new course prepared by Mr. Kok titled "Applied Theosophy" (based on GdeP's paradigm of the human constitution in his *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*), has started, with an enrollment of over 90 students. In addition to this, regular public meetings well attended continue at the center.

Harry Benjamin Books in Foreign Languages

We learn with pleasure that Harry Benjamin's books have now been translated into German, Dutch, Norwegian, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, French. This refers, we think, mainly to his books on 'better sight without glasses.' It would be cheery news if it included also his *Everybody's Guide to Theosophy*, now issued by Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois!

La Saggezza del Cuore

We hear from Professor Bernardino del Boca, Alice Castello, Torino, Italy, that the Italian translation of *The Wisdom of the Heart: Katherine Tingley Speaks* (one of Point Loma Publications recent books) has been completed and "will be published in the first months of 1981." Prof. del Boca is the director/editor of "I Quaderni dell' Età dell' Acquario." One of their earlier publications was G. de Purucker's *Mahâtmas and Genuine Occultism*.

Krotona Institute, School of Theosophy

In the first three months of this year Joy Mills, Director of the School, has continued her "Studies in The Secret Doctrine," and Dr. John Algeo, Professor of English at the University of Georgia, has presented two courses, "The Bhagavad-Gita for Westerners," a chapter-by-chapter study of the greatest poem in the Indian religious tradition," and "Occult Themes in Fiction," analyzing "the appearance of such themes as reincarnation, karma, the Masters, ritual magic, thought power, clairvoyance, and after-death states, in a number of modern classics." Other courses were "Scientific Verification of Clairvoyance" (presented by Dr. David D. Lyness, psychiatrist from Toowoomba, Australia); "The Inner Side of Music" (Diana Dunningham, of Auckland, New Zealand); "T'ai Chi: Taoist Meditation in Movement" (Michael Sellon); and "Theosophy Through Games" (Laurie Harris and Linda Wilson, from Australia).

Biographies of the Esoteric Great

In the magazine *Hermes*, issued the first Saturday of every month by U.T.F. (Universal Theosophy Fellowship, 326 West Sola St., Santa Barbara, Calif. 93101), are a series of biographies of theosophic and historic interest. We list the last several, beginning with the issue of April 7, 1979: Apollonius of Tyana; Philo of Alexandria; Ammonius Saccas; Simon Magus; Paul of Tarsus; Marcus Aurelius; Plotinus; Porphyry; Proclus; Hermes Trismegistus; Cleanthes of Assos; Chrysippus of Soli; Epicurus; Epictetus; Origen; Iamblichus; Hypatia, Roger Bacon

Hermes is a journal of theosophical thought, which "explores the philosophical foundations and therapeutic applications of the accumulated wisdom of the ages."

New From Wizards Bookshelf

Another of the Secret Doctrine Reference Series; *Eleus-*

inian and Bacchic Mysteries: a dissertation. By Thomas Taylor, edited and with Introduction, Notes, Emendations, and Glossary by Alexander Wilder, M.D. Third Edition. Bibliography also of the works of Thomas Taylor, and biographical profile of Dr. Wilder. (Hard cover, 192 pages, \$8.95).

And please take note: *another revised edition* of The Zohar (Beresh-Genesis): an Expository Translation from Hebrew by Nurho De Manhar; Complete with Three Hundred Paragraphs of Footnotes Extracted from *The Secret Doctrine*, *Exordium* and Explanatory Notes assembled and compiled by John Draais. In addition: two articles by H. P. Blavatsky appended to the text: "Kabbalah & Kabalism" (*Lucifer*, May 1892), and "Tetragrammation" (*The Theosophist*, November 1887). (Hard cover, 424 pages \$18.50).

For complete catalog write: Wizards Bookshelf, Box 6600, San Diego, California 92106.

Koeksister

This bi-monthly published by Rosemary Vosse, Malton Road, Wynberg 7800, South Africa, has as its humanitarian aim a "three-in-one plan" to bring together people, and especially women, of the three principal racial groups speaking three languages, in understanding and harmony in that sensitive area of the world. "Surely there is *something* each of us can do to alleviate a little the suffering of mankind," declares *Koeksister* No. 20 editorial of 6th November 1980. One feature of a suggested program "is for women and their families to get together and break down some barrier (social, linguistic, political, etc.) on one day in the year, to be called World Family Day. The date will be the first Sunday in July and the celebration will be held partly in the kitchen, with all giving a hand to prepare a dish of *koeksisters* for tea—it's quite a job. Working together helps to break the ice, and once that is done further meetings can follow, leading to friendship and understanding." And editor, and inspirer of the whole venture, Rosemary Vosse, quotes an old Chinese saying: "When goodness rules in our hearts, there will be beauty in our character. When there is beauty in our character, there will be harmony in our home. When harmony rules in our home, there will be order in our nation. When order rules in all nations, there will be peace in the world." And she ends: "Let us join hands, sisters, and step into one more year of life joyfully and fearlessly!"

Evolution in the News

Evolution is always a subject for lively and often controversial discussion. The *New York Times* of November 4, 1980, carried the report of a four-day meeting of 150 scientists specializing in various aspects of the subject. They met at Chicago's Museum of Natural History "to thrash out a variety of hypotheses that are challenging older ideas."

One puzzle, they noted, still unsolved is the fact that every organism is governed by the same genetic code system, controlling the same biological processes. Does this, they asked, corroborate the facts of Darwin's theory of the origin of species? It appears to be a question without a

satisfactory answer, and fruitful material for intelligent analysis.

Naturally, there was much discussion as to the value of what fossil hunting has unearthed. For example, they have traced the species through successive layers of sediment. Species simply appear at a given point of geological time, persist largely unchanged, and then disappear. What is the explanation? Each discovery leads to an unanswered question. To quote the closing words of the report: "The fact of evolution is well established. But after four days of what Dr. Gould called 'a healthy and joyous debate,' there seemed to be little agreement on how anybody could establish with some certainty that it happened one way and not another."

Theosophy, we feel, could tell them something *real* about evolution.

An Idea for Others?

C.R. of San Francisco, Calif. instead of the annual \$2.50 subscription renewal to the *Eclectic Theosophist* sends \$5.00—one to keep, one to *give away*!

Boris de Zirkoff—Ave Atque Vale!

As we go to press we have received not unexpected word of the death on March 4th of Boris de Zirkoff, last surviving relative of H. P. Blavatsky. March 7th would have been his 79th birthday. In August of 1979 he had undergone a major operation, and in the last several months of 1980 and this year had been rapidly weakening physically. (Subscribers to his *Theosophia* may write for further information about that quarterly to: Dara Eklund, 4118 Whitsett Ave., Studio City, Calif. 91604.)

A friend of the whole Theosophical Movement has laid down his burden and has now embraced that state of consciousness we designate as Peace and Rest so needed at cyclic times in the Unending Journey. Boris must have felt, shall we say, happy — perhaps that is a good word — in the knowledge that his particular contribution this life, not only to theosophical students but in reality to the whole world, was completed: the compiling and editing of the *Collected Writings of H. P. Blavatsky*. We are informed that the last two volumes, Vols. 13 and 14, are in the printer's hands and that arrangements are going forward speedily for their publication by Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton.

For Boris, a friend of many decades this life, an affectionate salute. Let not words mar what else for the moment we might say.

—THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTIONS

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